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# Alabama Pilot Tells Bay of Pigs Role

CHICAGO, March 7 (UPI) — An Alabama pilot and editor said today he was one of 18 American airmen who "responded to a personal invitation" to take part in the Cuban Bay of Pigs' invasion.

Albert C. Persons, in a dispatch in Chicago's American, said Cuban Dictator Fidel Castro had 48 hours' advance notice of the invasion and was thus "allowed all the time he needed to successfully disperse aircraft, tanks and troops."

The American, in a separate story, named Brig. Gen. G. Reid Doster of the Alabama Air Guard as the man in charge of tactical air operations in the invasion. The newspaper said Doster was identified as tactical air chief by retired Maj. Gen. David W. Hutchinson of Oklahoma City.

Doster, the American said, referred the newspaper to Persons, 47, a former World War II pilot and now managing editor of the weekly Birmingham Examiner.

Persons, in a dispatch banished in today's American, said the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was not to blame for the Bay of Pigs fiasco and "has been forced to accept the scapegoat role in silence."

Persons said also that:

- With Cardona, who has been widely quoted as saying he was held incommunicado by the CIA and never informed when the invasion was

to be launched, was actually in Guatemala for a last-minute pep talk to his troops—who were even then being airlifted to Nicaragua where invasion transports lay at anchor off Puerto Cabeza."

- President Kennedy reportedly vetoed a plan to save the invasion from failure by throwing U. S. troops into the invasion. The United States would have been given a "casus belli," Persons said, by a fake bombing of the Guantanamo Naval base.

- The President never made a decision to withdraw U. S. air support from the invasion forces "for the reason that such support was never a part of the original planning of the operation."

Persons said his role was confined to non-combat activities

during the invasion. He said he and the other recruits were briefed twice by four men who gave only their first names and "represented themselves as being with a company under contract to one of the Cuban exile groups."

"Ours was not a job that could be volunteered for," Persons wrote in the American. "Each of this small group had responded to a personal invitation."

The Americans "were hired to replace inexperienced Cuban air crews," Persons said.

When failure of the invasion appeared sure, Persons said, one of the American pilot proposed a plan to bring the United States into the conflict.

Aircraft with Cuban markings would "strafe runways

and drop a few bombs on areas inside the Naval base at Guantanamo. All personnel, naturally, would have been removed from these areas ahead of time."

Persons said "I was told that this proposition was presented to the President of the United States. I cannot, of course, confirm this. If so, he turned it down."

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